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"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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Editorial

The Evolution of Temperance

Are we gradually growing more temperate in the consumption of intoxicating liquors? The statistical tables unmistakably show a constantly increasing consumption, but this may be due to the increasing population rather than to any growth of the drink habit among the people. In either case, however, it is no cause for congratulation, but for deep concern, lest all our efforts to stem the tides of drunkenness will be as little effectual as a barrier of sand against the incoming billows of the sea.

Nevertheless there are in some directions manifest signs that the evolution of temperance is laying solid foundations for a more hopeful future, and among these signs may be mentioned the latest attitude of the business world on this vital question. Half a century ago the man of affairs resorted to stimulants to reinforce his mental and physical vigor, particularly when some important business matter came up for discussion, but today liquor as a lubricant to business is no longer tolerated in any business house. Railroads forbid their employees the use of intoxicants, and large manufacturing establishments are beginning to adopt the same policy. The army alone, among great organizations, insists upon the necessity of its grog, but the army is not a normal institution, and ought not to be expected to rise much above the idiocy and immorality in which it has always been cradled.

Now when the great business institutions, and particularly shrewd and far-seeing business men, adopt temperance, or abstinence, as an essential *business* policy, a great bulwark is at once raised against the saloon, which in the end must be of enormous benefit to society and civilization. We may be certain that the business world has not gone into the temperance cause from any moral or benevolent considerations. Legitimate business may be moral, but it certainly makes no point of benevolence. If the railroads, heads of great mercantile houses, and managers of extensive factories, could make money by allowing or encouraging their men to drink, it will hardly be doubted that they would facilitate the habit in every convenient manner. Plentiful supplies would be placed within reach of the workers, and there would not be very much concern how many of them went to the devil provided the dividends were increased.

But the business world has found out that the fool who goes to the devil by the saloon route is worthless for business in *any* capacity. More emphatically is he incapacitated for those important duties which require a clear head, a cool

nerve, and hardy powers of endurance. He is unfit to run an engine, guide a lathe, tend a loom, control a furnace, build a house, manage a mill, or do anything else where a muddled brain means failure, often disaster. It has been discovered that the man who drinks is inevitably left behind in the keen competition of business, and what the temperance advocates who went at the drink habit from the ethical standpoint were unable to accomplish, has been won by the logic of dollars, until the time seems to be near at hand when the business world will array itself against the liquor habit with the stern determination and invincible energy of a crusade.

That this is a most encouraging feature of the temperance contention appears from several considerations. The temperance societies attack the liquor problem from the moral side. They fire from the ground that it is wrong to drink, and support their attack by exhibiting the evil fruits of this wrong doing, the ruin wrought by rum in the bodies, minds and souls of its victims; the distress, privation and despair it brings to helpless women and children. The Prohibitionists charge the saloon on its political side, that as a dangerous nuisance, the greatest source of expense, loss, harm and demoralization to society, it ought to be outlawed, and put in the same category as any other crime, as murder, or theft, or arson. But when the business world fully awakes to the fact that the saloon is the greatest enemy of its progress and success, when hard headed business men of every kind and grade realize that it knocks dollars out of their pockets all the time, we will see such a revolution in sentiment and such quick and vigorous action against this gigantic evil as will startle the nations and make the moss covered conservatives think that the end of the world has arrived.

We have assembled all these tendencies, processes and agitations under one head and called the result "the evolution of temperance," because it is God's eternal law that all unrighteousness is to be cured by its own evil effects. The transgressor, whatever his bent, inevitably finds out that his way is hard, and that makes him tired of it sooner or later.

The logic of penalty may be slow, but nothing can be more convincing.

To enlighten ignorance by preaching this fact helps him who is disposed to listen to reason, but give penalty time enough and it will enlighten the densest ignorance and conquer the most inveterate obstinacy.

There never did, and never will, exist anything permanently noble and excellent in the character which is a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial.—*Selected.*